

PINCHING THE INSANE POOR.

STATE CHARITIES AID ON ODELL'S FRUGALITY.

The State Still Overcrowds Its Hospitals—Still Pares Appropriations So That Deficiency Bills Come Annually to Maintain a Decent Standard of Care.

Facts set forth in the annual report of the State Charities Aid Association to Gov. Odell's Commission in Lunacy, which came out yesterday, do not agree altogether with the opinions expressed by the Governor in his recent message concerning conditions in the State institutions for the insane. The Governor in his message says that "in every direction that which is for the benefit of the patient has been furnished," and that "up to the present there seems to be no just cause for complaint."

The report says that the conditions in the past year have been better than those which existed under the parsimonious policy of the previous three years, but the appropriations and expenditures for the year 1903 are \$105,000, making an allowance for the \$50,000 that was applied to the deficiency. The present actual deficiency, the report says, would not be a serious matter were it the only deficiency which the Legislature of 1904 will be called on to make good. But it will not be the only one. The appropriation of \$3,915,000 which the Legislature of 1903 made for the fiscal year of 1904 is much more inadequate, it is declared, than that made by the Legislature of 1902 for 1903. The estimated population of the State in 1904 is at least 2,500,000. The per capita rate of maintenance allowed by the Legislature is only \$1.59, while an expenditure of at least \$1.75 will be necessary, which means, according to the report, that the Legislature of 1904 will be called on to make up a deficiency for the maintenance of the insane of at least \$400,000.

By way of parenthesis it may be recalled that a favorite boast of Gov. Odell is that he is cutting down the running expenses of the State and the State's institutions. The annual per capita rate of maintenance, which previous to 1900 had never been below \$1.75, was, the report says, "gradually reduced until in 1902 it reached the unprecedented and entirely inadequate rate of \$1.09, or 44 cents a day. So low a rate could have been made possible only by a degradation of the standard of care of the patients and by the deferring of expenditures for needed repairs and equipment."

The increase of \$11 for the past fiscal year in the per capita rate of maintenance was due, the report says, to a large extent to the rise of prices, especially for fuel, which alone accounts for nearly one-half the total increase. It is admitted, however, that in some measure, but not, as Gov. Odell's message would imply, entirely, it is due to a rise in the standard of care, especially in the feeding and clothing of the patients, and to the allowing of necessary and long needed improvements and repairs at the various institutions.

"The expenditure for the maintenance of the insane during the past year," the report says, "has been as small as was consistent with the preservation of a decent standard of care, and is the lowest that could be used without establishing the amount needed." The report also says that a per capita rate of \$1.75 would be none too large. It predicts that the Legislature of 1904, in addition to the appropriation of \$3,915,000 for the fiscal year of 1904, will be called on to make an appropriation of at least \$250,000 for the support of the insane, and that the total appropriation of \$4,165,000 will be necessary.

As to the buildings and improvements of the last year, the report says that on Oct. 1, 1903, there were in the State hospitals 2,000 patients in excess of the capacity of the institutions. The delay in preparing accommodations for the insane, it is asserted, is the most unsatisfactory feature of the present system. Little effort seems to have been made to provide accommodations before the arrival of the patients. The report also says that the delay in preparing accommodations for the insane, it is asserted, is the most unsatisfactory feature of the present system. Little effort seems to have been made to provide accommodations before the arrival of the patients. The report also says that the delay in preparing accommodations for the insane, it is asserted, is the most unsatisfactory feature of the present system. Little effort seems to have been made to provide accommodations before the arrival of the patients.

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